

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Survey no. PG: 68-15b

Magi No.

DOE   yes   no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Mortuary Chapel And Cloisters at Fort Lincoln Cemetery

and/or common The Little Chapel

**2. Location**

street & number 3401 Bladensburg Road (U.S. Route 1)    not for publication

city, town Brentwood    vicinity of    congressional district   

state Maryland    county Prince Georges

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u>  </u> district	<u>  </u> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<u>  </u> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<u>  </u> unoccupied	<u>  </u> commercial
<u>  </u> structure	<u>  </u> both	<u>  </u> work in progress	<u>  </u> educational
<u>  </u> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<u>  </u> entertainment
<u>  </u> object	<u>  </u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<u>  </u> government
	<u>  </u> being considered	<u>  </u> yes: unrestricted	<u>  </u> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<u>  </u> no	<u>  </u> military
			<u>  </u> museum
			<u>  </u> park
			<u>  </u> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<u>  </u> scientific
			<u>  </u> transportation
			<u>  </u> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Capitol Cemetery of Prince Georges County

street & number 3401 Bladensburg Road telephone no.: (301)864-5091

city, town Brentwood    state and zip code Maryland

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince Georges County Courthouse liber 142

street & number Main Street folio 151 & 15

city, town Upper Marlboro    state Maryland

**6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys**

title None

date    federal    state    county    local   

depository for survey records

city, town    state

## 7. Description

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Condition  
☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

Check one  
☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

Check one  
☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Mortuary Chapel at Fort Lincoln Cemetery was designed by architect Horace Peslee. Construction was completed in 1929, that same year it was awarded one of eight "Diplomat of Merit" award from the Washington Board of Trade's, Committee on Municipal Art. The plan of the chapel is in the form of a cross, with the altar located within the apse. There are eight stained glass windows located along the walls of the nave and in either transept. These stained glass windows depict the seven stages of man as portrayed in Shakespeare's play "As You Like It". The main entry is marked by a stone arched canopy, supported by two columns and two pilasters, all having corinthian capitals. Located in both transepts are doors leading to the cloisters and the cloister garden behind the chapel. These cloisters are semi-circular and enclose the garden. Within the outer walls of the cloisters are niches to place urns and crypts for entombment. The architecture of the chapel and cloisters can best be described as stripped classicism with distinct Byzantine overtones.

The Mortuary Chapel and Cloister Garden was designed by architect Horace Peslee and completed in 1929. The plan of the chapel is in the form of a cross with the altar located in the end apse. A choir loft is located on the east side of the apse and a loft for an organ is located on the west side of the apse. The crossing is a domed space with a stained glass oculus in the center of the dome. A bier was originally located in the center of the crossing, however, this was replaced by a lift when a crematorium was added underneath the chapel several years after the completion of the chapel. Because of the crematorium beneath the church, a chimney was built against the outside wall at the intersection of the nave and the east transept. The crematorium beneath the chapel is no longer in use therefore, the chimney has been capped off and converted to the bell tower that exists today.

Along the nave and in the transepts are eight beautiful stained glass windows depicting the eight stages of man as portrayed in Shakespeare's play "As You Like It". The interior walls are stucco finished and painted off white and pale yellow. The ceilings, with the exception of the domed space at the crossing, are the exposed heavy timber framing of the roof. Large arched openings, supported by pilasters, frame the domed space at the crossing. The capitals of the pilasters are interpretations of the corinthian style. Elements such as these, the stucco finishes, the heavy timber roof framing and the sandstone exterior finish gives the chapel a "Byzantine" feel. Although, the scale and the details in the chapel are interpretations and an eclectic blending of elements, a distinct Byzantine overtone is found throughout.

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Description (continued)

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The cloister garden and the cloisters are located behind the chapel and arranged symmetrically with the central axis of the chapel. The east and west cloisters extend in a quarter circle arc extending from either side of the transept and terminating at two small rotundas. The south cloister extends in a shallow arch connecting the east and west rotundas. In the exterior walls of both the east and west cloisters, and the walls of the rotundas are niches, covered with memorial plaques, to place urns. In the exterior wall of the south cloister are crypts for entombment within the wall. Also, located off of each rotunda, is a room which is a private family crypt.

# 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

## Specific dates

## Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or  
Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☒ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G  
Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Mortuary Chapel and Cloister Garden at Fort Lincoln cemetery, although small in scale, has the proportions and symmetry found throughout much of "classical" architecture. The texture and heaviness of the building materials is reminiscent of Byzantine architecture. This is, however, not a faithful replication of Byzantine architecture. With the exception of classic revival styles, many of the early American architects mixed and adapted classical elements to form unique and lively architecture. The chapel at Fort Lincoln is a wonderful example of a skilled architect's ability to blend several elements together to create a building that is both beautiful and unique.

The chapel and garden are not only fine examples of early 20th century architecture. They are two of the few remaining pieces of architecture in this area designed by architect Horace Peslee.

Horace Peslee was an architect of local prominence in the Washington D.C. area. He was not only a talented designer, he was also very involved with civic affairs. Peslee was involved with many committees and organizations committed to improve the image and quality of architecture in the city of Washington. He submitted plans to establish a design commission for private construction in the city that would parallel the Commission of Fine Arts. The plan was accepted and a committee was formed and became known as the Architects Advisory Council. The council's two main objectives were: 1) to restudy the plan for the extension of business and residential streets within the district in order to minimize future destruction of existing natural landscape, and 2) to establish an advisory body "to extend the aesthetic supervision to the private building development of the city".<sup>1</sup> Although the formation of the

<sup>1</sup> Bushong, William. "A Centennial History of the Washington Chapter: The American Institute of Architects 1887 - 1987" The Washington Foundation Press. 1988

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Statement of Significance (continued)

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council was met with opposition from the local development community, it continued to operate, reviewing plans submitted to the building inspector for permits, until 1932 when it was though the council was no longer needed.

Horace Peslee was also the director of a drive to support a national movement, sponsored by the American Civic Association, to for a regional planning commission in Washington. This lead to the formation of the National Capital Park Commission which later became known as the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

During the depression Peslee served as the Director of Housing for the Public Works Administration, where he encouraged the employment of architects for the restoration of historic structures. Peslee himself was involved in the restoration of Maryland's first Capital in Saint Mary's city.

Horace Peslee was also known as a landscape architect, one of his most noted works is the Meridian Hill Park on 16th street in Washington D.C.. Some of his other works in this area include the Marine Corps War Memorial Grounds and the Dwight D. Eisenhower estate in Gettysburg, PA. His works were widely published and received numerous awards including several form the Board of Trade for design excellence<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> ibid.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Bushong, William. "A Centennial History of The Washington Chapter: The American Institute of Architects 1887 - 1987." The Washington Architectural Foundation Press. 1988

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 157

Quadrangle name Washington East

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
None			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas M. Behrens

organization The Catholic University of America date April 16, 1992

street & number 620 Michigan Avenue telephone (202) 319-5188

city or town Washington state D.C.

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (cont.)**

The American Architect December 5, 1926. Plates 305 & 306

The American Archtiect May 20, 1929. Pages 692 & 693

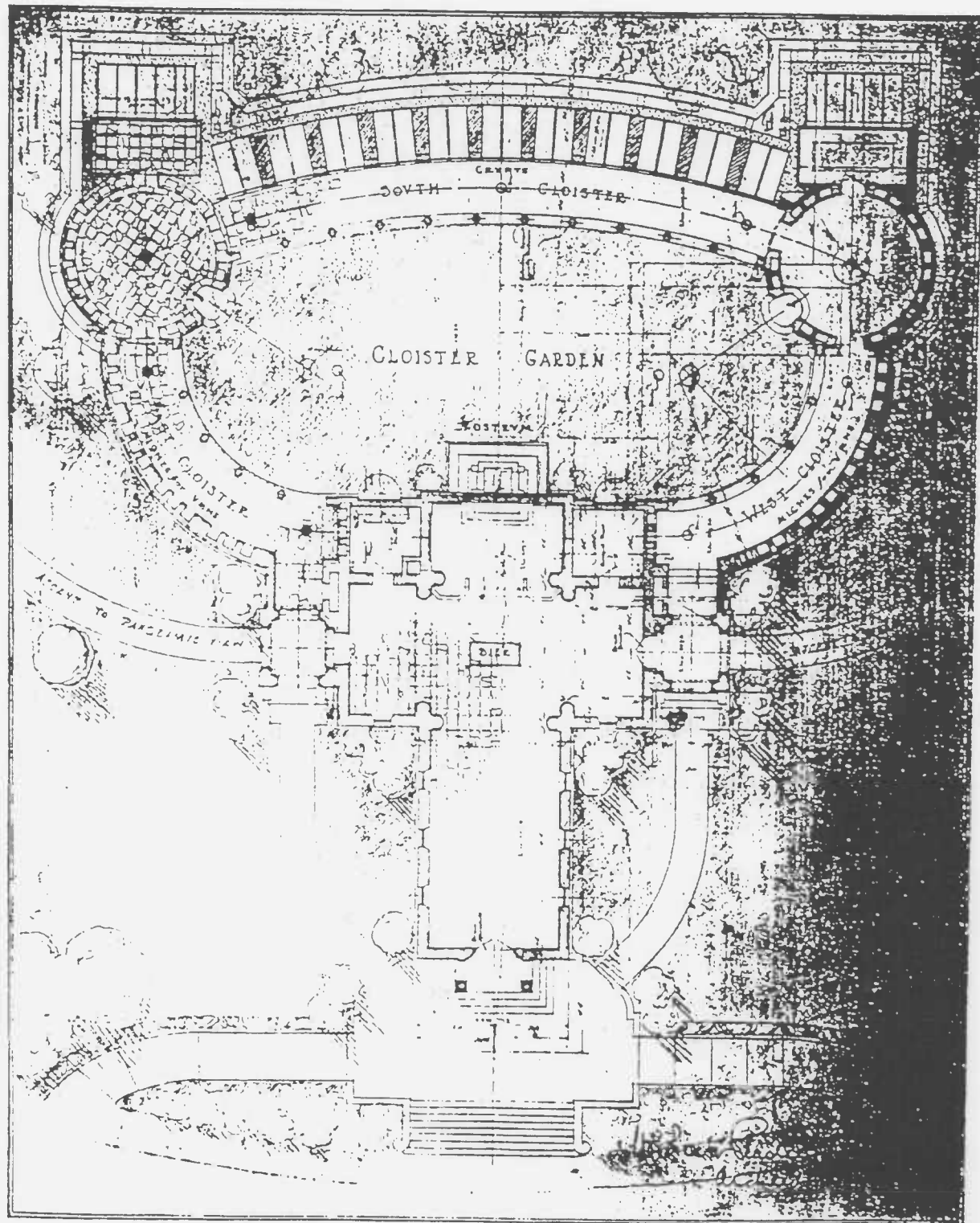
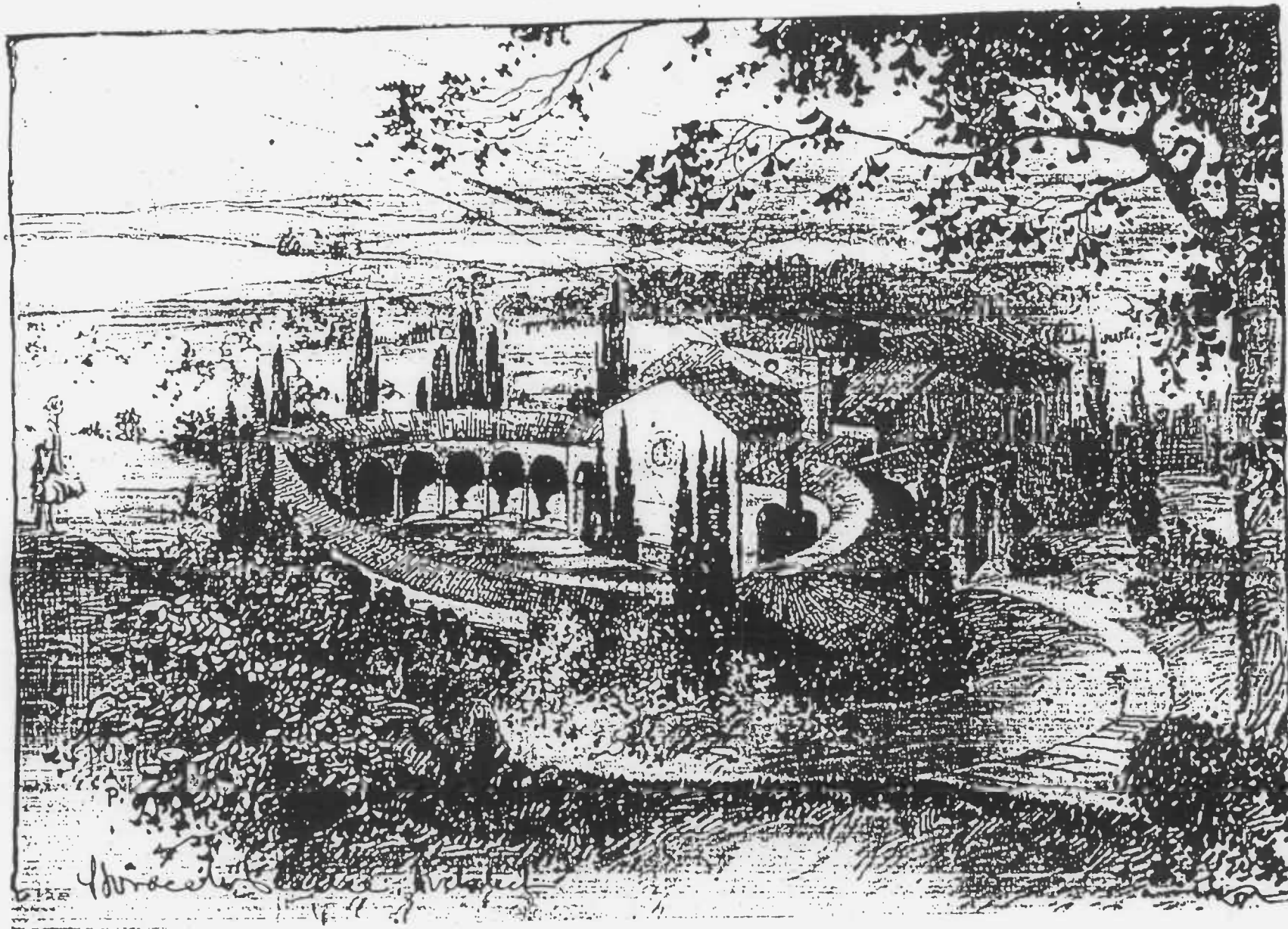


FIG. 1. MONASTERY OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE, JERUSALEM  
 PLAN OF THE CLOISTER AND GARDEN  
 (FROM THE ARCHITECTURAL RECORD, 1901, VOL. 1, PLATE 1)





MORTUARY CHAPEL AND CLOISTERS

FORT LINCOLN CEMETERY, WASHINGTON, D. C.

REPRODUCED FROM ORIGINAL SKETCH BY HORACE W. PEASLEE, ARCHITECT  
(See plan on back)

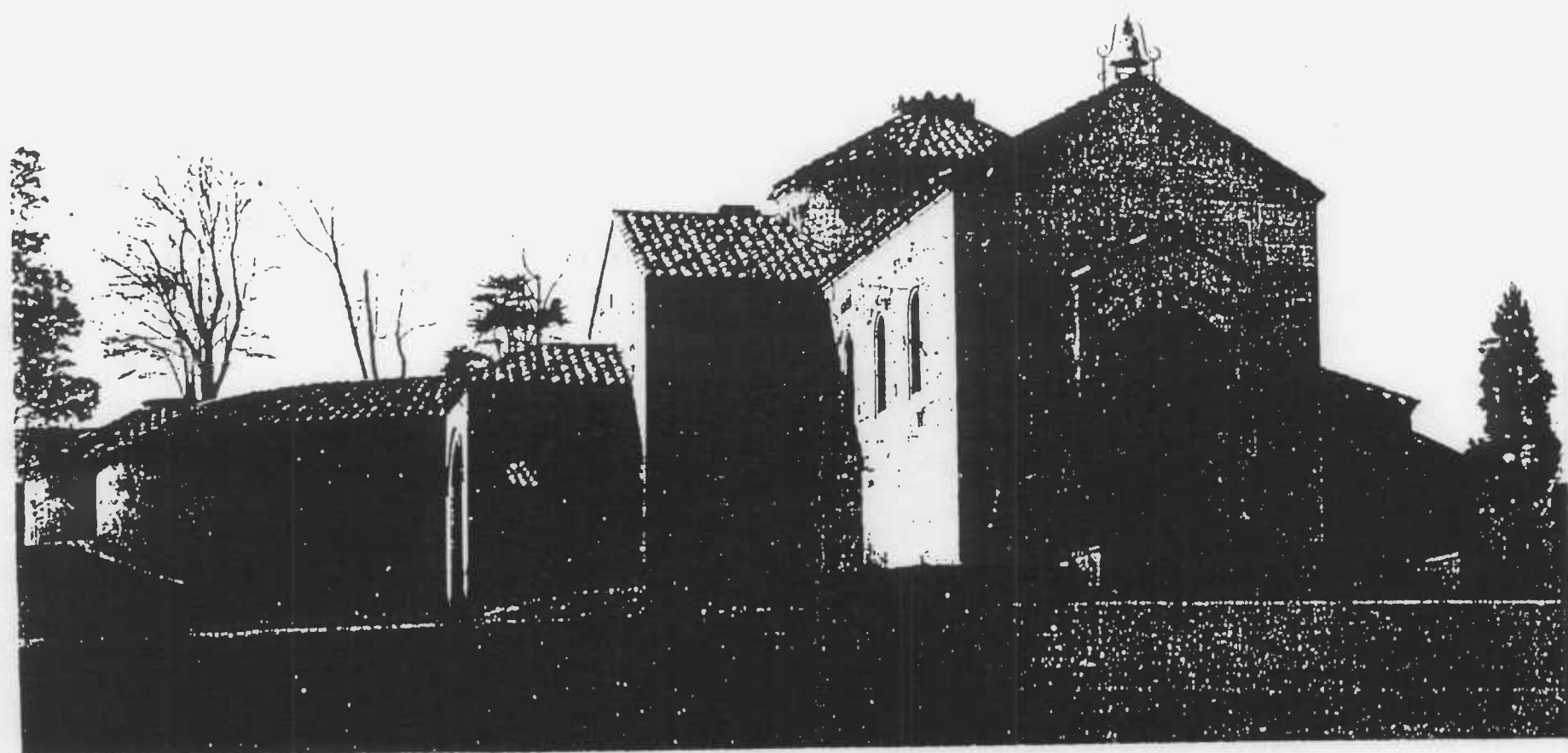
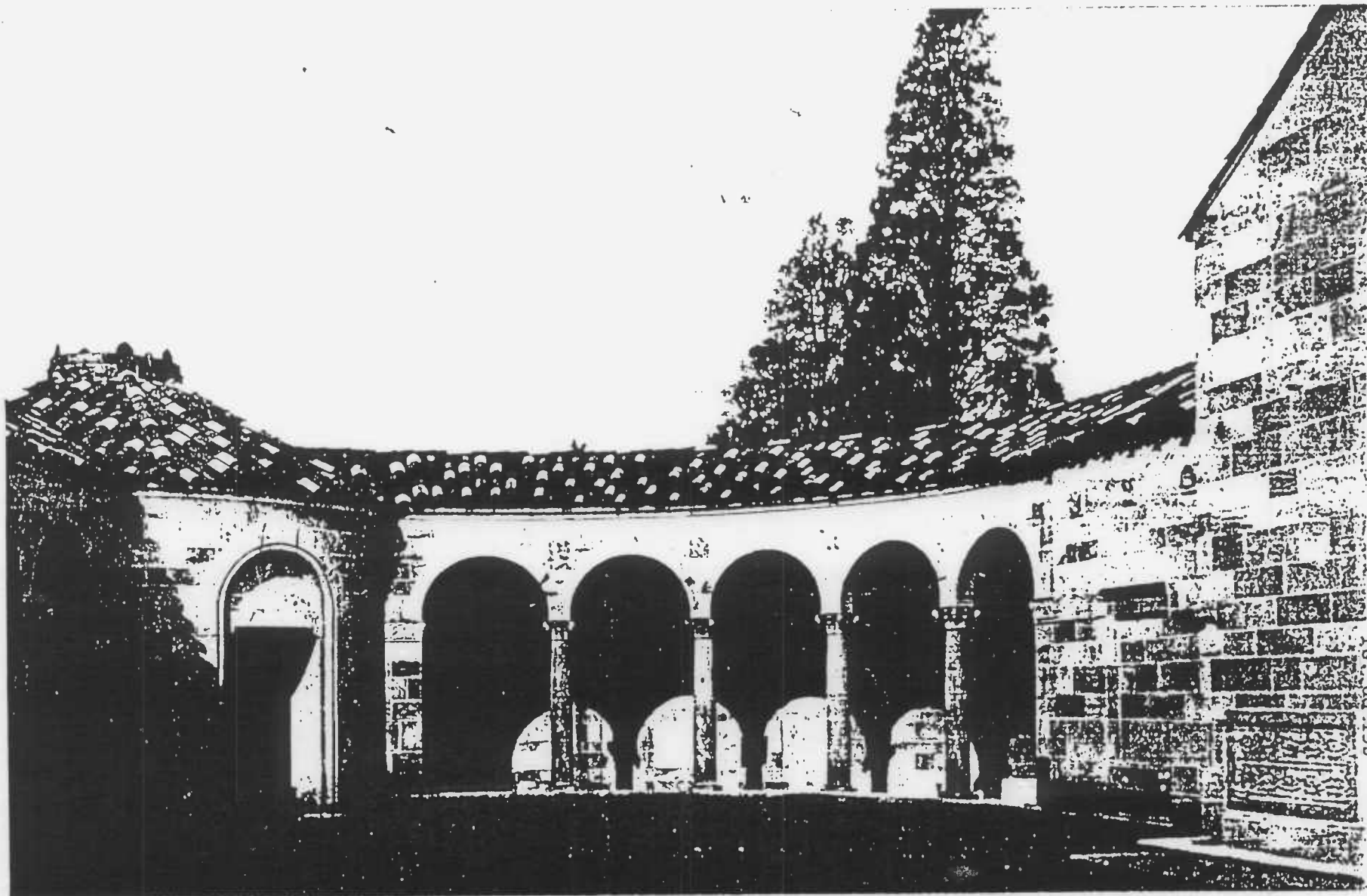


Photo by Plater

FORT TOTTEN, CEMETERY MORTUARY CHAPEL, WASHINGTON, D. C.  
DORACE W. PLASSEE, ARCHITECT  
One of eight cemeteries erected, 1905-9, by American Board of Trade



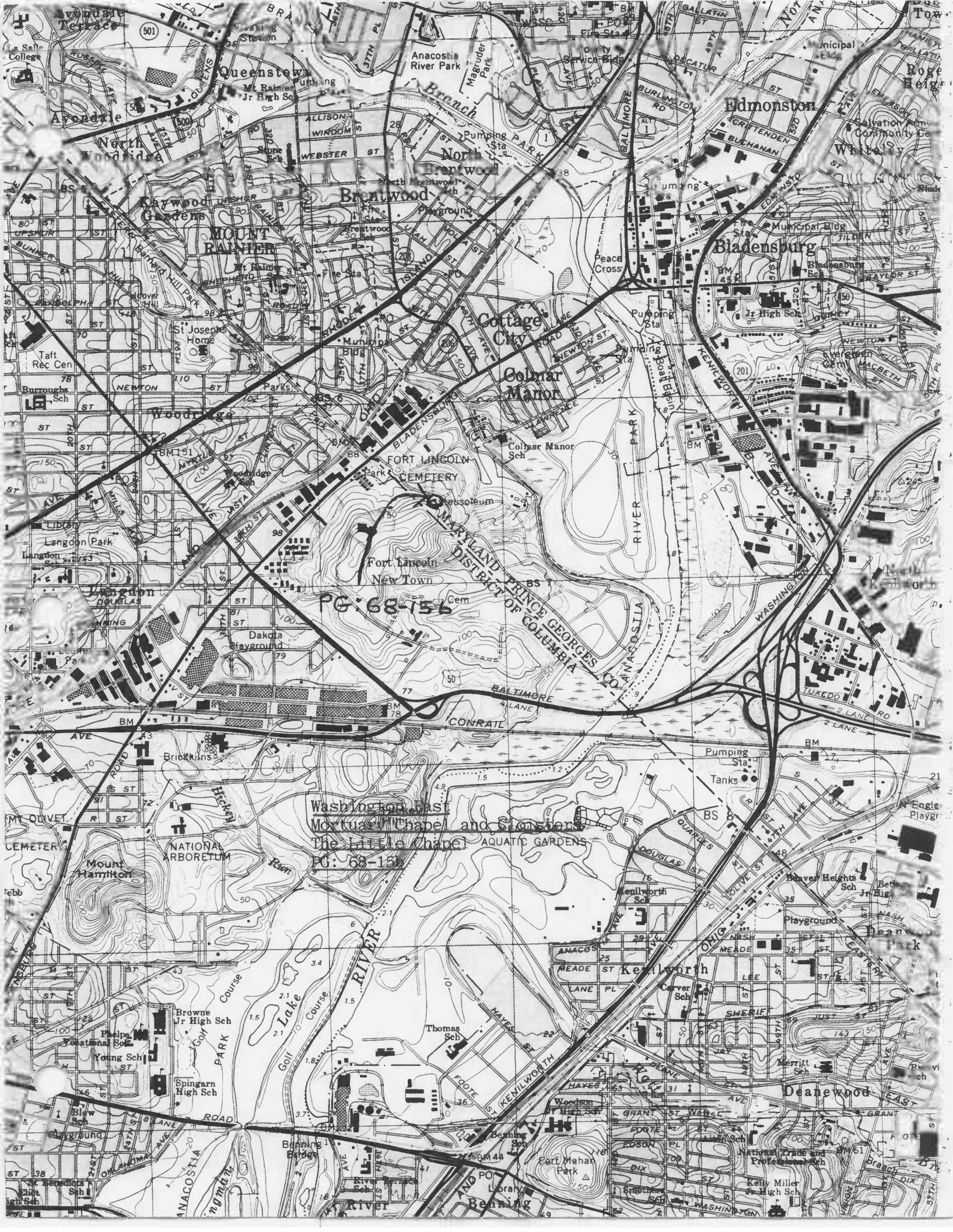
PG: 68-15b

Photo by Tamm

FORT LINCOLN CEMETERY MORTUARY CHAPEL, WASHINGTON, D. C.

HORACE W. PLASSETT, ARCHITECT

One of eight awards for merit, U.S.C. Washington Board of Trade



Washington East  
Mortuary Chapel and Cemetery  
The Little Chapel  
PG: 68-153

PG: 68-154





PG: 68-158

Monetary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery

JR 41+90 1144456



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery





PG: 68-15B

Montuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery





PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery.

JR 41-06-100004



PG: 68-15B

Montuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery

1905 11/11/11 11/11/11



PG: 68-15B

Montuany Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery

JR 43-69 44-74



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel & Cloisters at  
Fort Lincoln Cemetery





PG: 68-15B  
Mortuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel + Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary

at Fort

Chapel & Cloisters

Lincoln

Cemetery



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery

JR 43161





PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel + Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel & Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery



PG: 68-15B

Mortuary Chapel \* Cloisters  
at Fort Lincoln Cemetery

JR 41-01 11/11/11